SPECIFICATION

Attorney Docket No. 04286.00124

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that **Donald E. Godshaw**, a citizen of the United States and a resident of Evanston, Illinois; and **Andrezj M. Redzisz**, a citizen of the United States and a resident of Wheeling, Illinois, have invented certain new and useful improvements in a

EXPANDING BAG

of which the following is a specification.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a principal aspect, the present invention relates to a bag construction, such as a tote bag, a backpack or a duffel, which may be fabricated from a flexible fabric or material and folded into a small package for purposes of storage, display or the like.

Manufacture and marketing of various types of soft bags such as duffel bags, tote bags, backpacks and the like are often accomplished by sewing various panels of flexible fabric or canvas. Fasteners, zippers and other closure mechanisms are then incorporated in the design so that a bag construction is provided which has a capacity that makes the bag useful for carrying items such as clothing, books and the like.

Bag constructions, however, are often bulky and in order to package, ship or display such items it is necessary to provide containers having a large size that will enclose the bag. Another option is to fold the bag. These options do not lend themselves to appropriate storage and display of the bag, however. That is, these options require, in many cases, extra packing materials which adds to the cost of the product. Further, there is no display panel associated with such bag constructions that will enable a shopper to easily identify the product. Folding of such bag constructions may provide creases which are not acceptable. Thus, there has developed a need for an improved generic method of providing a bag construction which has adequate size for an intended use on the one hand, but also enables conversion to a size and form for storage and display.

It is noted that various types of bags, such as computer bags, may include a panel which comprises an expansion panel that is released or opened by movement of a circumferential zipper

that otherwise retains the panel in a compressed, folded condition. The bag thus incorporates an expansion feature whereby an expansion panel is incorporated at some position in the bag. Typically, however, such an expansion panel does not provide a means for access to the interior of the bag. Thus, there has remained the need for a bag having the features described above as well as a bag which will permit access to the contents of the bag when it is in an expanded condition.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly, the present invention comprises a bag construction which includes a first small partial bag joined to a second much larger, partial bag. The first partial bag forms a part of one side of the second partial bag. The first partial bag further includes a display panel incorporated on one side thereof. The second partial bag includes a generally large, flat or slightly curved side panel that forms a side of the bag generally opposite the first partial bag. The large second bag side includes a section or portion with a fastener that may be attached to a congruent fastener on one side of the first bag so that all of the contents and material comprising the second bag may be folded into and stored in the first partial bag and retained thereby by cooperative engagement of the fastener mechanisms.

The first partial bag thus is a smaller bag which typically includes a first display panel, a peripheral side panel and an opposite side which is also a part of the second partial bag. The first partial bag is essentially a five-sided container with an open sixth side. Attachable to the open sixth side is a section or portion of the second partial, larger bag. The second larger sized partial bag may thus be compressed into the first bag and retained thereby by the fastener mechanism placed on the outside of the side panel of the second bag. With the construction as described, it is possible to provide a tote bag with a handle along the top open side, a backpack with carry straps attached to the sides of the backpack or a duffel with handles for the duffel along a top side.

Thus, it is an object of the invention to provide a bag construction which may be reduced in size and folded in a manner which will enable improved display, packaging and storage.

Another object of the invention is to provide a bag construction which is easily converted from a configuration for storage to a configuration for use.

Another object of the invention is to provide a bag construction which is economical, easy to use, flexible and rugged.

These and other objects, advantages and features of the invention will be set forth in the detailed description which follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

In the detailed description which follows, reference will be made to the drawing comprised of the following figures:

Figure 1 is a front side isometric view of a tote bag embodiment of the invention;

Figure 2 is an isometric view of the tote bag of Figure 1 in assembled or folded condition;

Figure 3 is an isometric view of the tote bag configuration of Figure 1 as viewed from the opposite side depicted in Figure 1;

Figure 4 is an isometric view of the tote bag of Figure 1 in a partially folded condition;

Figure 5 is an isometric view of a second embodiment of the invention in the form of a backpack;

Figure 6 is an isometric view of the backpack configuration of Figure 5 in a folded configuration;

Figure 7 is an isometric view of the embodiment of Figure 5 in a partially folded condition;

Figure 8 is an isometric view of the invention as incorporated in a duffel bag wherein the duffel bag is in the fully expanded position;

Figure 9 is an isometric view of the bag of Figure 8 wherein the bag is in a partially compacted or assembled condition;

Figure10 is an isometric view of the bag of Figure 9 in the fully compacted condition; and

Figure 11 is an isometric view of the backside of Figure 10.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the detailed description which follows, reference will be made to three embodiments of the invention. However, additional embodiments are contemplated as within the context of the general invention as described. Figures 1-4 illustrate a first embodiment of the invention in the form of a tote bag. Figures 5-7 illustrate a second embodiment of the invention in the form of a backpack. Figures 8-12 illustrate a third embodiment of the invention in the form of a duffel bag.

Tote Bag Embodiment

In Figure 1 the tote bag embodiment includes a first partial, reduced size bag 20 which incorporates a front display panel 22 and a peripheral side panel 24 that is attached to the front panel 22 about a circumferential or peripheral seam 26. Materials used to manufacture the tote bag of Figure 1 include fabric or canvas or other flexible materials. The front or display panel 22 of the first partial bag 20 includes a display or logo label 28. The peripheral or circumferential side panel 24 includes a second peripheral or circumferential edge 30 with a zipper 32 attached thereto.

The tote bag further includes a large, side panel 34 forming a side panel of a second partial bag 35. The side panel 34 is joined to a bottom panel 36. A first handle 38 is attached to a top edge 40 of the side panel 34. The first handle 38 includes a length adjustment mechanism 42. A second handle 44 is also attached to the peripheral edge or top edge 40 on the side of the tote bag side panel 34 opposite the first handle 38. A length adjustment mechanism 46 is also included for the second handle 44.

The circumferential or side panel 34 of the second partial bag 35 includes a zipper mechanism 48 in the side thereof generally opposite the first partial bag 20. The zipper 48 has substantially the same length and configuration as the zipper 32 and is designed to be attached thereto. Zipper 48 circumscribes a panel 47 which is substantially congruent with panel 22. Thus, the tote bag or partial bag 35 may be folded into the enclosure defined by the first partial bag 20 and the portion 37 of the side panel 34 circumscribed by the zipper 48. The zipper 48 may then be attached to the zipper 32 to fully enclose the tote bag 33 within the first partial bag 20 as depicted in Figure 2.

With the construction of this invention, the tote bag configuration may be assembled in the form of Figure 1 or Figure 2. For purposes of shipping, display and packaging, the configuration of Figure 2 is quite useful. For the purposes of use, the configuration of Figure 1 is useful.

Backpack Embodiment

Figures 5-7 illustrate the incorporation of the invention in a backpack. Referring to those figures, a first partial bag 60 is designed to receive the folded and compressed second partial bag 62 which is larger than the first bag 60. Thus, the first partial bag 60 includes a front panel 64 which is generally planar, a peripheral or circumferential side panel 66, and a portion of the second, larger partial bag 62. The front panel 64 includes a display section or badge 68. The front panel 64 further includes a zipper fastener 70 to the side panel 66. The zipper fastener 70 extends partially about the circumference of the side panel 66 to permit access to the interior of the first partial bag 60 and thus to the interior of the second bag 62 when in the form of Figure 5.

A second zipper fastener 71 is provided about the periphery 73 of the side panel 66 of the first partial bag 60. Side panel 66 is also sewn or attached to the second bag 62 at periphery 73. The zipper fastener is designed to be cooperative with a zipper fastener or mechanism 72 associated with or on the second partial bag 62. Thus, the second zipper fastener 72 is a mirror image of the first zipper fastener 71 so that the second partial bag 62 may be folded and compressed into the first partial bag 60 in the manner depicted in Figure 7. The second zipper fastener 72 may encompass or incorporate a panel or circumscribe a panel which is substantially identical in shape and size to the front panel 64. Alternatively, as shown in Figure 7, the zipper 72 may circumscribe a larger panel section 74. Importantly however, the length of the zipper fastener 72 is substantially identical to the length of the zipper fastener 71.

The second partial bag 62 includes a bottom panel 76 as well as a circumferential side panel 78. A medial zipper or closure mechanism 80 is incorporated in the side panel 78

extending from adjacent a bottom edge 82 to the opposite side of the second partial bag 62 for access to the interior of the second partial bag 62.

First and second back straps 84 and 86 are attached at their opposite ends to the side panel 78 so that the straps 84 and 86 will be incorporated within the folded or assembled second bag 62 when the second bag 62 is folded into the first bag 60 as depicted in Figure 6. The straps 84 and 86 include adjustment mechanisms such as adjustment mechanism 88 as depicted in Figure 5. Optional tabs or loops 90 for the first partial bag 60 and 92 for the second partial bag 62 are also provided.

In use then the second partial bag 62 may be folded into the first partial bag 60 again as depicted in Figure 7. The configuration resulting is depicted in Figure 6. In this configuration, the bag 60, 62 may be effectively shipped, displayed, packaged or stored. When in the configuration of Figure 5, of course, the backpack may be used in the normal fashion as a backpack with access thereto to the interior through the zipper fastener 80 as well as the zipper fastener 71, 72.

Note that in the preferred embodiments the first partial bag comprises an interior volume which is about 25% or less than the second partial bag 62. Further, the second partial bag 62 includes a planar side wall 78 or panel 78 which is generally a smooth, uninterrupted panel having a subpart 78A thereof with a fastener mechanism 72 that circumscribes a portion of panel 78 so as to be capable of comprising a wall of first bag 60. The portion or subpart 78A is preferably the size and shape of (congruent with) front panel 64, but in any event, the zipper

fasteners 71, 72 are equal in length. Very importantly, in all embodiments, the second partial bag is greater in volume than the first.

Duffel Bag Embodiment

Figures 8-11 illustrate the incorporation of the invention in a duffel bag construction. Referring to those figures, the duffel bag is comprised of a first partial bag 90 which includes a generally planar front panel 92 and a generally circumferential side panel 94 with a top zipper opening 95 through the side panel 94. A second partial bag 96 of significantly increased volume is made from a flexible fabric material and configured so that it can be compressed or fitted within the first bag 90. Figure 9 illustrates how this compression can take place.

The second partial bag 96 includes a peripheral side panel 112 and an end panel 98 in Figure 11 with a peripheral fastener mechanism or zipper 100 that cooperates with a peripheral fastener mechanism 102 associated with or along the backside outside edge of the side panel 94 of the first partial bag 90. Thus, the fastener mechanisms 100 and 102 may be connected together as depicted in Figures 10 and 11 to thereby encapsulate or enclose the second partial bag 96 within the first partial bag 90 and end panel 98.

The second partial bag 96 includes a top flap 104 with a zipper mechanism 106 that enables access to the interior of the second partial bag 96. Handles 108 and 110 are attached to the side panel 112 of the second partial bag 96 for carrying the duffel bag. The second partial bag 96 and more particularly, the circumferential side panel 112 provides and defines an enclosure for storage of various items. The end of side panel 112 opposite end panel 98 is attached to the outside edge of side panel 94. The entire side panel 112 may thus be folded into

the first partial bag 90. However, when the bags 90, 96 are assembled as depicted, for example, Figures 10 and 11, the combination of the two bags 90 and 96 provides substantially no means for storage, but does provide a compact assembly for purposes of display, packaging and the like. For purposes of display, a handle or loop 114 is attached to the backside panel 98 of the second bag 96. As an option, the second bag 96 may also include an additional opening mechanism, such as a zipper 116 for access to the contents or interior of the opened or expanded duffel. Internal compartments (not shown) within the duffel may also be provided. Preferably, there is no internal compartment wall associated with the first bag 90 inasmuch as the second bag 96 must be stored within the first partial bag 90.

Among the important features associated with all of the embodiments of the invention is the feature that the first partial bag does not include an internal wall separating the first partial bag from the second partial bag. Rather, the first partial bag includes a front display panel, a peripheral side panel, an open backside with a circumferential fastener mechanism, i.e. zipper. Secondly, the first partial bag includes a front panel, for example, panel 92 of the duffel construction of Figure 8, which serves an identifying panel to which a logo or sign may be attached. Another feature with respect to each of the embodiments is the provision in the second partial bag of a means for access to the interior of the second partial bag. The tote bag, of course, has an open top. The backpack includes a zipper access flap or closure. Similarly, the duffel includes a zipper flap operated enclosure. Another feature of the invention is the construction of the second partial bag having a panel which, in combination with the first partial bag, defines an enclosure for the second bag. The total enclosure is thus defined by the first

partial bag which includes a flat or generally flat or planar front panel, a circumferential side panel and the closed congruent panel or section, for example, panel 98 derived from the second partial bag 96.

Variations of the construction may be provided without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The invention is to be limited therefore only by the following claims and equivalents thereof.